

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 1, 8, and 14 as set forth above and have added new dependent claims 18-20. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The Office has rejected claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, asserting that the phrase, "which extend in towards the first axis" in claims 1, 8 and 14, is unclear. Accordingly, Applicants have deleted this phrase from claims 1, 8, and 14. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 8, and 14.

The Office has rejected claims 1 - 5, 7 -11, 13 - 15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 4,076,369 to Ostapovitch (Ostapovitch) and Claims 6, 12 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ostapovitch (US 4,076,369) in view of US Patent No. 5,554,056 to Henricus op ten Berg. The Office asserts Ostapovitch discloses an electrical socket contact 10 (Fig. 1-2,7) with a pin contact 20 that includes an electrically conductive body 11 having a pin contact engaging bore which extends at least partially along a first axis. The Office also asserts Ostapovitch discloses the body 11 has at least two pin contact arc receiving elements 18 which are spaced apart across the bore and having a distance that is greater than a maximum transverse dimension of the pin contact 20. Further, the Office asserts Ostapovitch discloses a plurality of conductive spring contacts 14 spaced from and not aligned with the arc receiving elements 18 in a direction along the first axis of the bore. The Office acknowledges that Ostapovitch does not disclose a latch spaced in from the spring contacts along the bore, but asserts Henricus op ten Berg discloses a socket contact 2 (Fig. 1) with a latch 16 spaced in from spring contacts 30 along a bore defined between the spring contacts.

Neither Ostapovitch nor Henricus op ten Berg, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest, "a plurality of conductive spring contacts which are substantially spaced in from and not aligned with the arc receiving elements in a direction along the first axis of the bore" as recited in claim 1, "the conductive spring contacts are substantially spaced in from and not aligned with the pin contact arc receiving elements in a direction along the first axis of the bore" as recited in claim 8, or "the conductive spring contact is substantially

spaced in from and not aligned with the pin contact arc receiving element in a direction along the first axis of the axial bore" as recited in claim 14. The Office's attention is respectfully directed to FIG. 3 which illustrates that the width of the pin 20 is about 15 mm and as illustrated in FIG. 1 a distance of about 15 mm between cantilevered beams 13 which extend from ends 14 would place the contact point between a pin 20 being inserted and the beams 13 extending from ends 14 before the domed portions 18. This is confirmed by the description at col. 2, lines 19-20, in Ostapovitch which states, "On insertion of a terminal pin [20], the beams 14 are spread apart." Accordingly, in Ostapovitch the beams 13 extending from ends 14 are immediately contacted when a pin is inserted and are not spaced in from the arc domed portions 18 as claimed. Additionally, since the pin 20 contacts the beams 13 extending from ends 14 before the domed portions 18, the dome portions 18 are not arc receiving elements as claimed and the beams 13 would be damaged by any arcing when the pin 20 is inserted. The Office has cited Henricus op ten Berg for a latch spaced in from spring contacts along a bore defined between the spring contacts and like Ostapovitch, Henricus op ten Berg does not disclose or suggest spring contacts spaced in from the arc receiving elements as claimed.

In contrast, as disclosed at page 3, lines 7-12 in the above-identified patent application, the present invention provides a configuration where the arc receiving elements function as "sacrificial" elements while the fully mated male/female electrical contact is established by a plurality spring contacts which maintain their electrical and physical integrity because of the arc receiving elements. The present invention provides the benefit of having fixed sacrificial elements which absorb any arcing damage while having protected spring contacts which provide a reliable electrical connection.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 8, and 14. Since claims 2-7 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 1, claims 9-13 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 8, and claims 15-17 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 14, they are distinguishable over the cited references and patentable in the same manner as claims 1, 8, and 14.

Applicants have also added new dependent claims 18-20. With the present invention, a substantially round cross-sectional shape for the bore helps to reduce arc points

in the connector. These claims are believed to be distinguishable over the cited references and thus in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

In view of all of the foregoing, applicant submits that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: Dec. 28, 2005



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